21 Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

control on quality and could bring together sufficient produce to make a transaction with an exporter worthwhile. As more and more Badagas became interested in growing cash crops, middlemen appeared not only to buy up small quantities of tea, coffee and potato but also to sell seed, fertilizer and even some insurance.

After Independence profiteering by the middlemen was largely checked by the Nilgiri Cooperative Marketing Society set up with state government aid (Vivekanandam Pillai, 1937, 249). Today there are nearly two hundred cooperative societies in the Nilgiris which pool the resources of members and also supply cheap fertilizer. Many such societies own local tea-processing factories and warehouses and are dominated by Badagas. After 1957 heavy loss through potato disease caused a widespread shift to tea or coffee growing,[22] and in the 1970s large acreages have been devoted to growing a sturdy new German variety of cabbage which finds markets nation-wide. Both tea and cabbage are quite successful crops. The availability of help from the Central Cooperative Bank made these unexpected switches in crops possible, for otherwise the initial capital outlay and the small size of most estates would have rendered the new venture unfeasible. Several cottage industries have also helped diversify the rural economy over the past thirty years; in particular beekeeping, liquor distilling, milk sales, knitting and embroidery have provided new, regular sources of income for many hundreds of Badaga families.

The early twentieth century saw the rise not only of wealthy Badaga land-owners but also of large-scale labour contractors. A few men profitted by getting the contracts for gangs to dig pits for planting tea-cuttings, pick coffee-beans, build roads or construct public buildings in the district.[23] Less wealthy Badagas set themselves up as small shopkeepers, tailors or money-lenders or found work in a wide variety of urban trades.[24] Whenever possible the more resourceful reinvested their profits in land (Ranga, 1934, 10), either tea and coffee estates or farm plots formerly belonging to Kotás (Mandelbaum, 1955, 240). The other reinvestment commonly made was in college education for their sons. With the economy fully monetized the stress was now on providing stability for the coming generations.

MODERN EMPLOYMENT

Prior to World War I virtually all Badagas were cultivators, and

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50

was mostly in steep rocky places ill-suited to any cultivation.)

14. Grigg, 1880, 321, mentions there were 29,912 acres (12,105 ha.) of farming land on the plateau in 1862–1863 but considers this 'a fictitious number'. Fifteen years earlier Ouchterlony had estimated that the Badagas alone used 12,750 ha.; Grigg, 1880, 13.

15. It is 19 km. by road from Ootacamund and embraces the Badaga commune of So:lu:ru.

16. That Sholur was not atypical in this respect is suggested by the fact that in 1867 the average number of persons per Badaga household for the entire district was 4.36; Shortt & Ouchterlony, 1868, 61.

17. Land utilization figures for the entire district, 1905–1960, in Nambiar (1965), do not isolate the role of Badaga agriculture.

18. Ranga, 1934, 68. As early as 1908 Francis (p. 167) noted: 'Potatoes are much exported to Ceylon, the Straits [Malaya] and Burma . . .' It was in 1908 that the railway connecting Ootacamund with the plains was completed.

19. Ranga, 1934, 14–15, 18–22. 'In fact many planters advance money to Badagas to enable them to dig pits and plant tea . . . with the intention of being able to purchase that land'; Ranga, 1934, 15.

20. Merchants also granted credit for purchase of daily needs—at much inflated prices; Ranga, 1934, 73–74; Vivekanandam Pillai, 1937, 249. Such traders are an excellent example of Simmel's 'resident stranger', whose presence catalyses a peasant economy by affording credit; Simmel, 1923, 509–512.

21. De:vaso:le, Kolekombe, Se:las, Gudalu:ru, Manju:ru, Ki:kotagiri, Nedugula, and Naduvatta; Baikie, 1857, 38, 88; Grigg, 1880, 471.

22. Nambiar, 1965, 23. The first time this problem beset Badaga farmers was in 1880; B.E.M.S., 1880, no. 41, 37; Grigg, 1880; 134.

23. Ranga, 1934, 7–9. Badaga contractors had been involved in such work since the mid-nineteenth century; McPherson, 1870, 21.

24. Natesa Sastri, 1892, 753; Francis, 1908, 129; Thurston, 1909, vol. I, 63; Ranga, 1934, 8; Vivekanandam Pillai, 1937, 248. These jobs included builders, blacksmiths, brickmakers, carpenters, clerks, domestic servants, painters, gardeners, washermen, teachers, printers, forest guards, tailors, barbers, water-carriers, stone-breakers, rickshaw-pullers, and even coolies and scavengers.

25. Jagor, 1876, 201–202; unlike most Hindus the Badagas do not employ washermen.

26. These were mainly Christians.

27. The categories are taken from the 1961 *Census of India*.

28. The designation is not recent; Francis, 1908, 265. On the Backward Classes generally, see Béteille, 1969, 87–145. Very recently the Nilgiri Hill Tribe Badaga Welfare Association was formed to promote government action in classifying Badagas as Scheduled Tribe, which would have material advantages for the community.

245 Gardens. Multilayer gardens owned by a few Badagas are mostly located in valleys below 6,000 feet and on outer Nilgiri slopes. They are usually some distance away from Badaga hamlets or villages. Coffee is frequently grown with jack, lime, and mandarin orange trees, but a few other plants grown in Irula and Kurumba multilayer gardens may also be raised. Badaga single layer coffee gardens occur in localities similar to those with multilayer gardens, but their single layer tea gardens are now scattered over the entire region utilized by upper Nilgiri Badagas. The tea gardens near to or far from communities may now be considered a typical part of the Badaga occupance pattern. But even more typical are the kitchen gardens which surround most Badaga hamlets and villages.

241 Kitchen garden plots are usually protected by ditches, barbed wire fences, horizontal pole fences, piled brushwood, piled earth walls, piled stone walls, or planted shrub rows (Yucca sp., for example). Plots are usually small, a wide variety of plants are grown, seed may be sown or planted, tubers are planted, and intercropping is common. The agricultural cycle controlling planting, sowing, and harvesting in kitchen gardens generally corresponds with the dry fields agricultural cycle. Thus, plants are grown in kitchen gardens during a main agricultural season (karbokam) and a lesser agricultural season (kadaibokam). The varying personalities of cultivators are reflected in the different crops and crop combinations occuring in plots (Figures 19 and 20). Alternate planting of kidney beans (Phaseolus vulgaris L.) and potatoes on paralleled ridges is a popular practice. Frequently, paralleled but more widely separated intersecting cross-

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 139

244 ridges constructed in the same plots are planted with broad beans (Vicia faba L.) or peas. Kitchen gardens are typically better manured and cared for. Because they are nearer to community cattle-pens and (514) livestock huts, more manure is likely to be placed on them. Due to the absence of toilets in houses, community dwellers naturally defecate [364] more frequently on nearby plots. And lastly, women recurrently spread kitchen ashes or trash over kitchen gardens. When family members have 241 time to spare, they may easily care for kitchen garden plots near the 592 communities in which they live. Women work on them between their 462 household duties, and men who are regularly employed work on them during off duty hours.

175 Shifting agriculture. In 1800 the Badagas were practicing shift-
241 ing slash-burn (kottukadu) agriculture (Buchanan 1870, 1: 462). As
361 later writers described Badaga hamlets and villages in terms of permanence, it is conjectured that Badagas then dwelt in permanent communities and cultivated different plots on the nearby countryside from year to year. From the time Englishmen started to administer the Nilgiris
241 until the late 1800s, the bhurty revenue system existed over the upper
651 Nilgiris. Under this system a farmer could hold up to ten times the taxed land he actually cultivated in any single year. Therefore, a man who paid taxes on five acres could hold nine other five-acre plots scattered over the upper Nilgiris. Plot alternation accompanied by the necessary clearance of vegetation off fallowed land not cultivated for years, or off newly claimed forest land, formed a system of shifting agriculture. Another system was followed in the western Kundahs, which

243 were constructed in the fields, but there were also well cowdunged permanent threshing floors within communities. To thresh out grain, cattle were muzzled, lined up, tied together and to a central post, (462) and then driven around in circles over straw and grain. Women, however, used threshing sticks to thresh out grain on courtyards fronting (251) houses. Sun-dried grain was stored away in large conical baskets plastered inside and out with cowdung, but finger millet was often kept in pits.

241 407 In 1908 plows were still being used, but by 1930 they were no longer in general use (Francis 1908: 166; Carl 1930: 32). The abandonment of plows resulted from the need for deeper soil turnover and ridging in potato cultivation. This was touched upon by Robertson (1875: 26), who stated that "as the native plough cannot ridge the land, the preparation of the soil, except the mere stirring and loosening, is all done by manual labor, and the cost of putting in the crop is much higher than it need be were a mouldboard plough used; . . . ." Three Swedish moldboard plows were sent to the Nilgiris in 1882-83, and a Badaga purchased one after a plowing exhibit at Ketti (Madras Department of Revenue Settlement and Agriculture 1884: 19; M.D. of R.S. and A. 1886: 6). However, Badagas never adopted moldboard plows. If they had done so, it is likely that plows would still be used. In 1908 • 244 412 potato plots were prepared through use of digging forks, introduced by the English, and hoes (Francis 1908: 167-168). During World War I, when potato production was greatly increased, the borrowed English digging fork rapidly replaced the plow. There is a distinct possibility that varied hoe-forks now used by Badagas were locally developed in that

241 412 period (Figure 15).

In present dry field crop production land occasionally remains unterraced, but is more often shallowly terraced. Many farmers are 241 now, by requirement of the Madras Government, hewing out slopes to 656 form horizontal croplands on tiered terraces (Plate X, C). Dry fields frequently remain unenclosed. When land left in fallow for some time is again to be cultivated, vegetation will first be removed and burned in small piles.

In preparing ground for potatoes, men turn the soil with digging 244 forks. After about two or three weeks, clods are broken by women and 462 children. Both blunt and forked sides of hoe-forks are used in this 357 task. Undesirable stones and weeds are removed at the same time. Stones are utilized in terrace or wall construction, and ashes from weeds burned in piles are scattered over the land. Manure and compost brought in by women, bullock carts, or trucks are scattered over the 435 soil. Badagas sometimes purchased buffalo-dung from the Todas. After fertilizer has been worked into the soil with hoes or hoe-forks, parallaled potato ridges are constructed with similar implements. As this is a hard task, men often assist. Men, women, and children do the planting. A small amount of chemical fertilizer is included with each seed potato. At least two weedings are carried out through use 462 of smaller hoes, hoe-forks, and small weeding-hoes. Women and children 357 usually perform this task, and at the same time they mound the ridges. The first mounding aids in keeping spreading roots covered, and the 592 second helps protect the plant bases from strong monsoon winds. Most 251 family members work during the busy harvest season. After tubers dug

244 up with hoes and hoe-forks have been dried in the sun, they are removed
251 in baskets to houses, storage huts, or awaiting trucks.

When grain is to be sown, soil is turned over by women using
243 large- and medium-sized hoe-forks. Fields to be planted with grain
462 are infrequently manured, and chemical fertilizers are seldom applied. If manure or fertilizer is used, it will be spread over the field and worked in. Grain broadcast over fields by men is then worked into the soil with hoes or hoe-forks. In the eastern Nilgiris, amaranth, mustard, finger millet, and Italian millet are still sown together. Amaranth, mustard, Italian millet, and little millet are also mixed. Barley, buckwheat, and wheat are usually sown separately. Women and
[412] children seldom weed grain fields more than once. Sickles are standard harvesting implements, and women usually remove the grain heads.

Varied processing of grain heads depends upon the grain har-
243 vested. Little millet is cut near the base of the stalk. Grains are then trodden out by cattle moving about a central post, as in former times (Plate X,D). Threshing-floors may be temporarily located in
243 fields, or permanently near communities and on community courtyards.
251 Threshed little millet dried out on courtyards for several days is winnowed and packed away in sacks or wooden chests. Finger millet grain heads cut off plants are tightly packed into sacks. After sack openings have been closed with bound string, the finger millet is stored away in warm parts of houses for four or five days. During this time the grain turns dark brown, but should not be permitted to blacken. When the correct color is reached, grain heads are removed to threshing floors. The treaded heads are saved and dried, so that remaining grains